

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1-3 and 5-17 will remain pending in the above-identified application with claims 1-3 and 5-7 standing ready for further action on the merits, while remaining claims 8-17 stand allowed.

The amendment made herein to claim 1 does not incorporate new matter into the application as originally filed. In this regard, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate limitations previously recited in claim 4. It is noted that claim 4 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but otherwise indicated to be allowable. Thus, by incorporating the limitations of claim 4 into claim 1, it follows that claim 1 and all claims dependent therefrom should now be allowable.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 102

Claims 1 and 5-7 have been rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) by US 5,498,507 of Handa et al. Also, claims 1-3 and 5-7 have been rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by US 5,818,808 of Takada et al. Reconsideration and withdrawal of each of these rejections is respectfully requested based upon the following considerations.

As indicated above, claim 1 has been amended to recite limitations previously found in claim 4. Since claim 4 was not rejected over either of the above-cited references, it follows that

claim 1 is no longer anticipated by such references. This also follows from the fact that claim 4 was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent format.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants' appreciate the Examiner's courtesy in indicating that claims 8-17 stand allowed. It is believed that each of the pending claims 1-3 and 5-17 are now in condition for allowance since all prior outstanding rejections of claims 1-3 and 5-7 have been rendered moot by way of the instant amendment to claim 1.

CONCLUSION

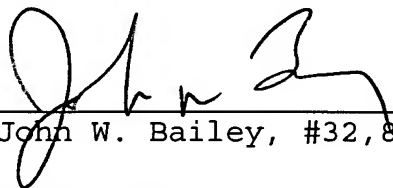
Based upon the amendments and remarks presented herein, the Examiner is respectfully requested to issue a Notice of Allowance clearly indicating that each of the pending claims is allowed and patentable under the provisions of Title 35 of the United States Code.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact John W. Bailey (Reg. No. 32,881) at the telephone number below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
John W. Bailey, #32,881

JWB:enm
4760-0101P

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000